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## EDITORIAL NOTES

A movement for educational reform which has recently been inaugurated in Germany under the name *Bund für Schulreform*<sup>1</sup> is probably unique in the variety of interests and membership which is united in aim and means to its accomplishment. The various members of the *Bund* stand united upon the platform: The school is not in harmony with the social, scientific, and ethical culture of the time nor with the nature of the child. This disharmony it is the aim of the *Bund* to overcome. Therein it is reformatory.

This, however, does not distinguish the present reform movement from its predecessors. More significant are the means upon which it relies.

*INVESTIGATION* First, it aims to collect and present the facts in regard  
*ITS FIRST* to the school conditions. In this respect it falls in line  
*OBJECT* with investigations with which we are becoming familiar in the United States, for example, studies of the facts regarding elimination or regarding the relative standing of the same pupils in the elementary school, the high school, and college.

As a beginning in a scientific study of educational problems four committees have been appointed for the investigation respectively of instruction in mathematics and the natural sciences, of the training of teachers, of elementary instruction by means of experimental schools, and of childhood. The chairmen of these committees are Professor Umlauf of Hamburg, Schulrat K. Muthesius of Weimar, Herr Karl Götze of Hamburg, and Professor Stern of Breslau (with the assistance of Professor Meumann of Leipzig).

The *Bund* does not advocate any single remedy which is to serve as a panacea for all educational ills. It is not assumed that some one form of school, as the industrial or trade school, for instance, will serve to bring the school into harmony with social life, or that some one method, such as object-teaching, will bring the school into harmony with the nature of the child. The particular reforms to be carried out are left to be determined by investigation.

<sup>1</sup>*Flugschriften des Bundes für Schulreform. I. Aufgaben und Ziele des Bundes.* Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1910.

The individual representatives of the *Bund* have, as individuals, it is true, some opinion as to the bearing of the experience already accumulated upon the solution of the problems they have set before them. As illustrations of the problems in detail and of the type of solution looked for some quotations may be made from the speeches delivered at the meeting held in March, 1910. Professor Meumann of the University of Leipzig said in regard to the results of the work of the secondary school: "There appears not only to be a serious loss of that which was learned in school, but, what is still worse, the school appears to give the pupil almost no stimulus to further independent prosecution of the study which was begun in the school except as his profession compels him. . . . I have often been in a position as an experimental psychologist to test our students in observation, the capacity for exact analytical seeing, the ability to give an account of what is seen and heard. . . . It has repeatedly struck me that the poorest and least reliable come from among the former *Gymnasium* students, and that in general the German student is inferior to the others in reliability and sharpness of observation. . . . When such disquieting results of school work may be shown something must be wrong. . . . It is, on the one hand, the far too great amount of material which is dealt with in our schools which causes the rapid fading out of that which has been learned. It must be one of the chief tasks of the reform undertakings to urge that the material taught be reduced to a minimum, and to see to it that the fundamentals and the kernel of the present material of instruction be extracted. Then this can be so thoroughly appropriated and digested by the student that it becomes clothed in flesh and blood and becomes a secure and permanent element of his knowledge.

"A second cause consists in the fact that the school affords the student too little stimulus to independent continuance of his school work. The school lessons must no longer appear as school lessons but as self-constituted tasks, not as a collection of demands imposed from without, but as knowledge and ability which he attains in his own interest. Then he will not forget his school books and break off his school studies when he leaves the school."

The other child-psychologist of the program, Professor Stern of Breslau, emphasized among other problems that of differentiating children on the basis of mental ability and advancement. "Here we have a new type of procedure, that is, to group the pupils psychologically. We touch here upon the point at which the need of psychological study in the school comes most clearly to light. . . . First those who are clearly below normal must be separated. To this end have been formed the *Hilfsklassen* which have been found so beneficial. Further, it is recognized that within the normal range there are large differences, which indeed the laggards or repeaters, driven hither and thither, must atone for with an embittered

EXTRACTS FROM  
SPEECHES AT  
THE FIRST  
MEETING

youth. Accordingly Sickinger, of Mannheim, created for this group of poorly endowed but normal children the promotion classes. They are at present in the midst of lively discussion in which this *Bund* must take a share. With this, however, psychological grouping is certainly not at an end. For like those who are below normal those who are above normal must also have special pedagogical attention. They do not come into their rights in the ordinary school. They cannot develop their gifts to the full, and because the work is too easy for them they cannot steel their will and develop their consciousness of duty. Accordingly the creation of advanced classes or schools for this group is doubtless only a question of time."

Some of the educational problems to the solution of which the physician may contribute were set forth by Dr. Weygandt, director of the insane asylum at Hamburg. After remarking that lying and cruelty are in certain stages natural, he continues: "Also the question how far the boldness, effrontery, and shamelessness of the one child and the diffidence, tendency to tears, moodiness, and sensitiveness of the other remain in the realm of the normal or indicate a nervous bent may often be determined only by medical assistance. Above all, the variations in mood, whether irregular or appearing as periodical changes in the whole bearing of the child, must here give warning of the need of caution. Furthermore, there are in the course of the child's development pauses and then again times of more rapid advance, which are natural phenomena; on the other hand, such phenomena are occasionally the indication of more serious psychical alterations. In short, there are cases enough where the physician and the psychologist must join hands in order to attain anything useful."

Other addresses were delivered by Professor H. Cordsen of Hamburg on the program of the *Bund*, by Director Wetekamp of Berlin on questions of administration, and by Justice P. Koehne on juvenile courts and protection. These addresses serve to indicate something of the scope of the *Bund*. When so diverse a group of educators unite upon a common program (the readjustment of the school to the environment in which it is set and to the child with which it deals) and employ a common method (that of scientific investigation) they seem assured of substantial results.

The *Bund* aims to bring to bear the facts and conclusions at which it arrives upon the reform of school conditions by publishing and disseminating them in various ways. For this purpose it has adopted a periodical as its organ, *Der Säemann* (B. G. Teubner, Leipzig). It further aims to publish the results of its labor in the form of scientific treatises, reports of a semi-scientific character, and pamphlets.

THE CO-OPERATION  
OF THE  
PHYSICIAN

CONSTITUENCY  
OF THE BUND

PUBLICATION OF  
PROCEEDINGS AND  
RESULTS

Though we in the United States have no such comprehensive organization, the same union of practical aim and scientific method exists in different isolated forms. For example, Section L of the *ANALOGIES* American Association for the Advancement of Science, *IN THE* the National Society for the Study of Education, the Association of College Teachers of Education, etc., are carrying forward similar work. The undertaking of research by a co-operation of associations of colleges and high schools, or of teachers' associations with members of university or normal-school departments, the establishment of experimental schools, the work of the consulting psychologist in a public-school system—all these are factors in the new type of educational reform. These are the sorts of movements with which the present-day educator must become acquainted and co-operate if he is to take part in shaping the education of the future.

These undertakings would be much more effective, however, if they had back of them some such comprehensive organization as the German *Bund*. Of the existing American organizations Section L *NEED OF CLOSER* resembles the *Bund* most closely in aim. But it is much too *ORGANIZATION* narrow in its constituency to have the greatest effectiveness. *IN THE* It is to be hoped that the time will come when all those *UNITED STATES* who are interested in shaping education on the basis of a scientific study of its problems may unite in an organization equipped to carry on its purposes most efficiently.

F. N. F.